

## Data Sheet

<b>USAID Mission:</b>	Nicaragua
<b>Program Title:</b>	Ruling Justly
<b>Pillar:</b>	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
<b>Strategic Objective:</b>	524-021
<b>Status:</b>	Continuing
<b>Planned FY 2005 Obligation:</b>	\$5,283,000 DA; \$3,472,000 ESF
<b>Prior Year Unobligated:</b>	\$0
<b>Proposed FY 2006 Obligation:</b>	\$5,119,000 DA; \$1,875,000 ESF
<b>Year of Initial Obligation:</b>	2003
<b>Estimated Year of Final Obligation:</b>	2008

**Summary:** USAID's program will help strengthen judicial institutions, leading to a more democratic Nicaragua. It will contribute to the enactment of better and more modern laws drafted and approved with strong public participation and ownership. Mobilization of public oversight groups will help promote and preserve USAID-supported reforms, including increased protection of human rights. As an integral part of the G-8 anticorruption initiative, USAID will focus on greater transparency and accountability of government by implementing an aggressive anticorruption campaign and promoting freedom of information for the media and the public.

### **Inputs, Outputs, Activities:**

**FY 2005 Program:** The U.S. Government is reassessing future interventions in the justice sector in light of a suspension of direct assistance to the judicial system in November 2003 that was partially lifted in May 2004. USAID will support re-engagement with the courts if and when the suspension is fully lifted.

Improve Justice Sector/Legal Framework (\$3,610,000 DA). USAID will fund training and technical assistance to advance implementation of the Criminal Procedures Code and the Criminal Code, reforms that were developed with USAID assistance. With the passage of the Judicial Career Law, which establishes ethical standards and defines tenure for judges, USAID will fund training for implementation of the merit-based system for selection, promotion, and discipline of judges and other judicial personnel, as well as judicial ethics. USAID-funded technical assistance will help consolidate public prosecution and defense functions by improving the public defenders office's capacity to provide pro bono defense services to the indigent and expanding access to and use of alternative dispute resolution. Technical assistance and training for public oversight groups will help mobilize support for judicial reforms and human rights protection. Principal contractors and grantees are Checchi and Company Consulting Inc., Florida International University, the Organization of American States (OAS), Carana Corporation, and other implementers to be determined.

Promote and Support Anticorruption Reforms (\$1,620,000 DA). Provided that progress in promoting judicial independence continues, USAID will fund technical assistance for judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and other officials to strengthen prosecution of corruption cases. USAID will fund targeted assistance to professional associations (i.e. associations of lawyers, law school deans, and business organizations) to improve their capacity to advocate for transparency-related reform on behalf of their members. Technical assistance and training for public oversight groups will raise public awareness and increase civil society participation in government oversight. Principal contractors and grantees are Checchi and Company Consulting Inc., Florida International University, and others to be selected.

Promote and Support Free and Fair Elections (\$3,472,000 ESF). With national elections scheduled for November 2006, USAID plans to provide limited support for election-related

activities to increase voter registration, open the environment for new political parties, and organize Nicaraguan advocacy groups to perform domestic electoral observation and voter education. Activities include updating civil registries and files for voter registration, mobilizing public oversight coalitions and media involvement for electoral monitoring, and increasing voter participation and public awareness. Support for international elections observers may also be considered. Implementers to be determined.

**FY 2006 Program:** Improve Justice Sector/Legal Framework (\$2,815,000 DA). USAID plans to fund training courses for prosecutors and defense lawyers and establish training units within the Public Ministry, the public defenders office, and law schools to continue advancing implementation of new, key laws such as the Judicial Career Law, the Prosecutor Career Law, and the Arbitration and Mediation Law. USAID plans to strengthen justice services by extending alternative dispute mechanisms and identifying reforms that will make the justice system more accessible to ordinary citizens. USAID expects to continue to support public oversight activities to advocate for justice and human rights reforms. Implementers to be determined.

Promote and Support Anticorruption Reforms (\$2,304,000 DA). Priority will be given to supporting the completion and implementation of key elements of the Government of Nicaragua's Anticorruption and Governance Strategy and Plan, as well as the government's implementation of its commitments with the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. USAID plans to support initiatives to improve budget transparency and management, with particular attention to the defense budget, education, health, and the justice sector. USAID may provide targeted support for governance and institutional reform efforts to increase the accountability of elected representatives to their constituents. In addition, USAID plans to continue to train local officials on transparent governance and help build local nongovernmental oversight. Planned activities, including training and technical assistance to key government agencies regarding responsibilities to provide public information, as well as media training in investigative reporting, will help implement the Access to Information Law. Implementers to be determined.

Promote and Support Free and Fair Elections (\$1,875,000 ESF). USAID plans to continue limited support for election-related activities to increase voter registration, open the environment for new political parties, and organize Nicaraguan advocacy groups to perform domestic electoral observation and voter education. Continuing activities would update civil registries and files for voter registration, mobilize public oversight coalitions and media involvement for electoral monitoring, and increase voter participation and public awareness. Support for international elections observers may be considered. Implementers to be determined.

**Performance and Results:** This is a new strategic objective that began in late FY 2003. Activities in support of this objective are expected to result in the full implementation of the Criminal Procedures Code and other legal reforms, including a new Criminal Code, during FY 2005. The public defender system will be expanded to help guarantee due process to Nicaraguan citizens regardless of their ability to pay. Passage and implementation of key legislation will enhance government accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. USAID played an instrumental role in calling attention to the issue of judicial independence and getting a new judicial career law passed. While the law has some problems, it is a great step forward in building judicial independence.

By program completion, USAID expects that Nicaragua will have made progress in establishing strong and democratic institutions and practices that are essential to achieving a full, functioning democracy and improving the domestic and foreign investment environment. Access to justice will have expanded through more capable justice institutions as well as availability of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Accountability of government and private institutions will have improved through better internal standards and increased citizen monitoring to prevent corrupt acts; and the government will have an enhanced capacity to identify and prosecute these acts when they occur.

## US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Nicaragua

	DA	ESF
524-021 Ruling Justly		
<b>Through September 30, 2003</b>		
Obligations	5,580	0
Expenditures	860	0
Unliquidated	4,720	0
<b>Fiscal Year 2004</b>		
Obligations	6,650	0
Expenditures	1,255	0
<b>Through September 30, 2004</b>		
Obligations	12,230	0
Expenditures	2,115	0
Unliquidated	10,115	0
<b>Prior Year Unobligated Funds</b>		
Obligations	0	0
<b>Planned Fiscal Year 2005 NOA</b>		
Obligations	5,283	3,472
<b>Total Planned Fiscal Year 2005</b>		
Obligations	5,283	3,472
<b>Proposed Fiscal Year 2006 NOA</b>		
Obligations	5,119	1,875
Future Obligations	11,521	0
Est. Total Cost	34,153	5,347